

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 20, 2018

The Honorable John J. Sullivan  
Acting Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Acting Secretary Sullivan:

We write in response to reports that the Department of Justice has dropped charges against 11 members of the Turkish President's security detail who were involved in the brutal attacks on peaceful protesters outside of the Turkish Ambassador's residence in Washington, DC on May 16, 2017. One of these 11 was the leader of the security detail. The Department of Justice reportedly dropped charges against four of the security team members on November 7, 2017 and then dropped charges against seven more on February 14, 2018. We write to request information about the Department of State's role in reaching these conclusions and the timing of the decisions relative to Secretary Tillerson's visit with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on February 15, 2018.

As you know, several members of Congress expressed outrage at the time of the attacks. On June 6, 2017, the House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution condemning these brutal actions and calling on the State Department to hold the perpetrators accountable. Secretary Tillerson personally condemned the attacks and committed to conducting a thorough review of the incident in order to make an appropriate determination about the course of the prosecutions and the possible revocation of visa eligibility for the individuals involved. Formally charging the individuals responsible for the attacks was the right thing to do.

Such violent behavior, especially by a security detail in the U.S. during a diplomatic visit, cannot be tolerated. It is criminal and violates U.S. values. This is also not the first time that there has been violence on U.S. soil at the hands of Turkish security personnel. It is imperative that there are significant consequences, including legal accountability, imposed as a result of the events last May to ensure that this kind of incident is never repeated.

Specifically, we ask that you provide responses to the following questions:

1. What was the nature and substance of State Department communication with Turkish government officials leading up to Secretary Tillerson's February 15 meeting with President Erdogan in Ankara regarding potential legal action against the President's security forces? How was the message that charges were dropped first relayed to President Erdogan?
2. What was the State Department's role coordinating with the Department of Justice in assessing the merit of the charges? Were other consequences (i.e. diplomatic) considered?

3. What tangible steps has the State Department taken to prevent future incidents that threaten civilians? What assurances have you received from Turkey that incidents like the one that occurred in May 2017 will not happen in the future, and how will Turkey be held accountable for such assurances?

We are echoing similar warnings from Members of Congress when many of us expressed strong opposition to a proposed small arms sale of \$1.2 million worth of semiautomatic handguns intended for the same Turkish security forces responsible for the attack. A bipartisan group of Members of Congress wrote to you on June 21, 2017, with concerns that such a sale could indicate that the U.S. is turning a blind eye to the criminal actions of President Erdogan's security personnel. We were relieved to learn that the sale did not proceed.

We strongly urge you to prioritize accountability for the Turkish officials who perpetrated the disturbing attacks in Washington, DC last year, and insist that President Erdogan take tangible steps to ensure that such an incident is never allowed to happen again. Thank you for providing a timely response to our inquiry.

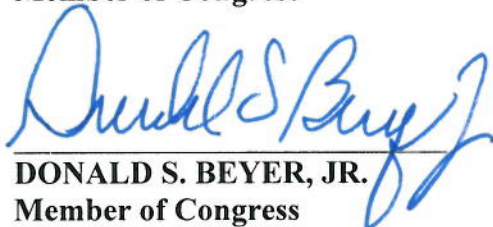
Sincerely,

  
**CAROLYN B. MALONEY**  
Member of Congress

  
**GUS M. BILIRAKIS**  
Member of Congress


  
**BILL PASCRELL, JR.**  
Member of Congress

  
**ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**  
Member of Congress

  
**DONALD S. BEYER, JR.**  
Member of Congress

  
**ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**  
Member of Congress

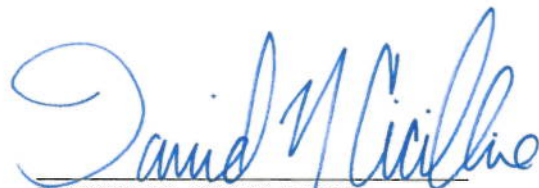
  
**JUAN VARGAS**  
Member of Congress

  
**TED POE**  
Member of Congress





**JAMES P. McGOVERN**  
Member of Congress



**DAVID N. CICILLINE**  
Member of Congress



**LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ**  
Member of Congress



**DEVIN NUNES**  
Member of Congress



**RAÚL M. GRIJALVA**  
Member of Congress



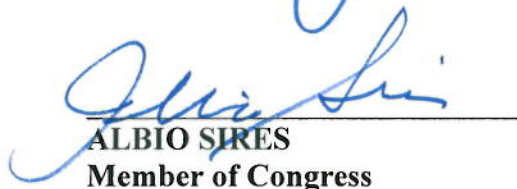
**BRIAN HIGGINS**  
Member of Congress



**ZOE LOFGREN**  
Member of Congress



**LEONARD LANCE**  
Member of Congress



**ALBIO SIRES**  
Member of Congress



**FRANK PALLONE, JR.**  
Member of Congress



**DAVID A. TROTT**  
Member of Congress



**ANNA G. ESHOO**  
Member of Congress



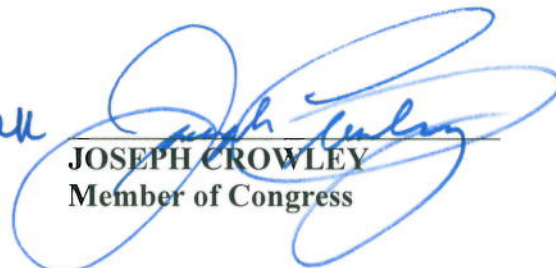
**THEODORE E. DEUTCH**  
Member of Congress



**ADAM B. SCHIFF**  
Member of Congress



**KATHERINE M. CLARK**  
Member of Congress



**JOSEPH CROWLEY**  
Member of Congress



**ANN WAGNER**  
Member of Congress



**BRAD SHERMAN**  
Member of Congress



**DANA ROHRABACHER**  
Member of Congress



**ROBERT A. BRADY**  
Member of Congress



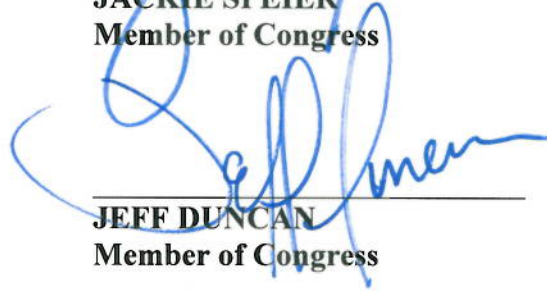
**NIKI TSONGAS**  
Member of Congress



**JACKIE SPEIER**  
Member of Congress



**DINA TITUS**  
Member of Congress



**JEFF DUNCAN**  
Member of Congress



**JIM COSTA**  
Member of Congress